DOCUMENT RESUME

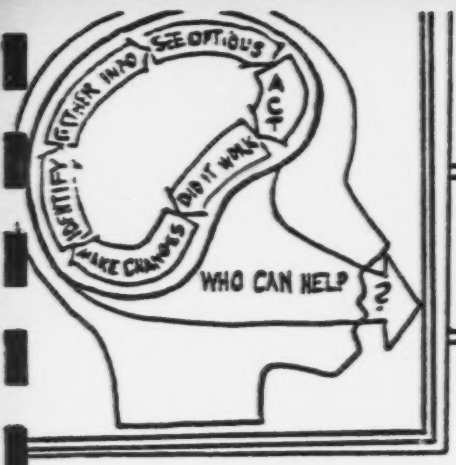
ED 268 310 CE 044 165

| | |
|---|---|
| AUTHOR | Coleman, Trudy; And Others |
| TITLE | Dealing with Death. Coping with Crisis. |
| INSTITUTION | Luzerne Intermediate Unit 18, Kingston, Pa. |
| SPONS AGENCY | Pennsylvania State Dept. of Education, Harrisburg. |
| PUB DATE | 85 |
| NOTE | 24p.; For the other modules in this series, see CE 044 161-164. |
| PUB TYPE | Guides - Classroom Use - Materials (For Learner) (051) |
| EDRS PRICE | MF01/PC01 Plus Postage. |
| DESCRIPTORS | Adult Basic Education; *Death; *Decision Making Skills; Diseases; *Grief; Learning Activities; Problems; *Problem Solving |
| IDENTIFIERS | 310 Project |

ABSTRACT

This instructional packet is one of a series of five modules that emphasize a systematic decision-making model for common problematic situations. The steps of the model are identifying the problem, gathering information, developing and assessing alternatives, implementing a solution, and evaluating and modifying the solution. Aimed at adult basic education (ABE) students, each packet contains the following sections: pretest; objectives; information for the learner, with relevant exercises and worksheets, case studies that students can discuss together; and posttest. In addition, a form for students to evaluate the materials is provided. The packets were designed to be flexible, to stress problem-solving techniques that can be transferred to other situations, and to use community resources. Materials can be used on an individual or group basis, and usually can be used independently with evaluation and reinforcement provided by the teacher. This packet, on dealing with death, covers stages of the grief process, dealing with feelings, care for the dying person, wills, and funerals. (KC)

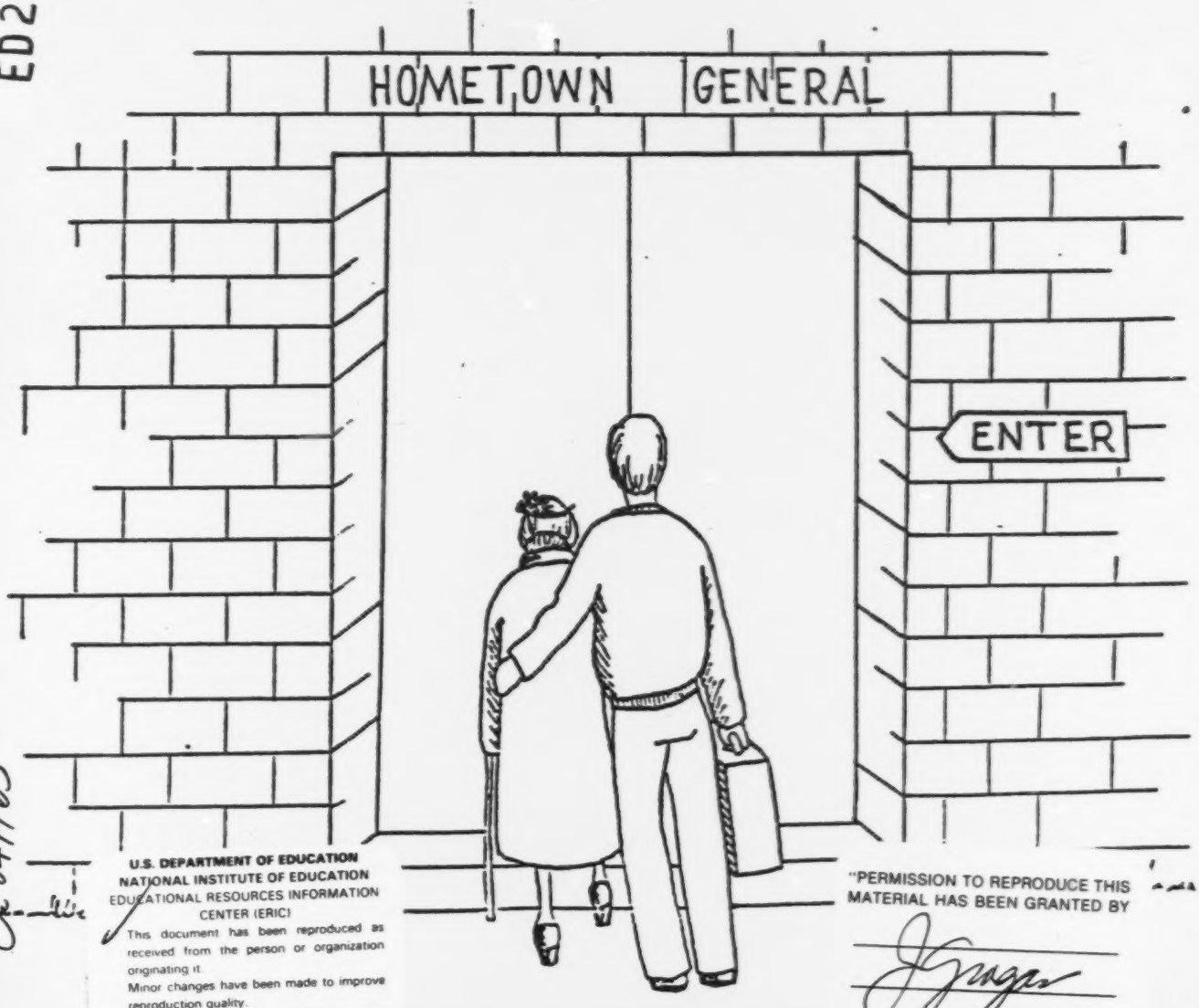
**********
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
**********




# COPING WITH CRISIS

# DEALING WITH DEATH

ED268310




CE044165

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)
This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.
Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.
• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official NIE position or policy.

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY
J Griggs
TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

# COPING WITH CRISIS

# DEALING WITH DEATH

by

TRUDY COLEMAN, Illustrator

JANE GROGAN, Project Director

ROBERT KOTSULL, Consultant Adult Basic Education

ANTHONY ROSTOCK, Consultant Reading Specialist

*DEVELOPED THROUGH A 310 SPECIAL PROJECT*
*ADULT BASIC EDUCATION GRANT*
*FROM THE PENNSYLVANIA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION TO*

**LUZERNE INTERMEDIATE UNIT 18**
**368 Tioga Avenue**
**Kingston, Pennsylvania 18704**

**1985**

Luzerne Intermediate Unit 18 extends equal opportunities to all individuals without discrimination because of race, creed, color, sex, age, national origin or handicap.

## FOR THE TEACHER

**Coping With Crisis for the Adult Learner** is a series of five instructional packets which emphasize a systematic decision-making model for common problematic situations. Although the topics vary for each packet, the format and strategies remain constant.

### RATIONALE

The rationale for the entire series is that, regardless of the problem, the use of a general problem-solving approach usually yields positive results. This approach can be summarized as follows:

1. **Identify the problem.**
2. **Gather information.**
3. **Develop and assess alternatives.**
4. **Implement a course of action.**
5. **Evaluate the solution and make necessary modifications.**

Many times, individuals involved in Adult Basic Education (ABE) programs may find themselves overwhelmed by personal problems. Without the skills to attack the problems systematically, the person may be at a loss as to how to proceed. As a result, the difficulties remain unsolved. In addition to the personal consequences, there are educational implications as well. Such a person is likely to find it difficult to benefit fully from any education program until progress is made in other areas of his/her life.

### FORMAT

Each packet contains the following sections:

1. **Pretest - used to assess prior learning and for evaluation purposes**
2. **Objectives**
3. **Information for the learner - with relevant exercises**
4. **Case Study - Upon completion of the questions it is helpful for students to discuss their responses**
5. **Post test - for evaluation**

These packets were designed to be flexible, to stress problem-solving techniques which can be transferred to other situations, and to utilize community resources. Depending on the situation, the materials can be used on a group or individual basis. A fourth-grade reading level is utilized throughout. For the most part, learners will be able to proceed independently with evaluation and reinforcement provided by the teacher. Numerous opportunities are provided for students to apply what they have learned within a practical context, and teachers can help by encouraging the adult learners to complete all exercises.

## FOR THE STUDENT

At some time, almost everyone has problems with their health, children, money, or marriage. You can't avoid such problems entirely, but still you can learn to handle them in a positive way. The series, **Coping With Crisis**, will give you information so you can find answers which meet your needs.

Whenever you have a problem, you need to tackle the issue. You must also admit that physical and emotional stress can happen with it. For example, the stress that starts with a money problem can spill over and cause tension in a marriage. When a parent is ill, children may get upset too! To avoid one problem causing another, it is helpful to have positive ways to cope.

Although it is hard to say the specific problems that a person may have, it is helpful to know general steps which can work in solving just about any issue. These steps are called a decision-making model. The specific steps are:

1. **To understand what factors led to the problem.**
2. **To get information.**
3. **To think about different ways of solving the problem and to weigh the good and bad points of each.**
4. **To decide on a course of action.**
5. **To see if the solution worked and make any needed changes.**

Only rarely is one solution a perfect one. Almost any choice will represent a compromise. Often the biggest challenge is selecting the solution which meets your needs and is still fair to other people who may be involved.

### HOW TO USE THESE MATERIALS

Each booklet starts with a short quiz to help you see what you already know. Your time is valuable, and it does not make much sense to spend too much time on topics you already know.

The quiz is followed by useful information. The more you know about any issue the more likely you are to make a wise choice on how to solve it. This information uses the decision-making model. It will help you see how it is used in everyday cases. There are also some short exercises. These will help you to try out your new problem-solving skills. They will also help you find help in your own area that you can use when a problem occurs. Using such resources can help you bring expert advice to a problem. It doesn't mean that you've failed when you seek such help. It does show you we want the very best solution possible. You are also smart enough to know where to get such aid.

Next there is a Case Study which allows you to use all your skills in a real-life situation. In many instances, there are no "right" answers to case study questions. Therefore it can be worth-

while for persons working on the same packet to discuss their answers with each other.

Finally you will find another brief quiz. It will help your teacher learn if the packets were useful to you. The most important thing to remember is that your final goal should not be only to do well on the quiz. Your success really will be clear when you can tackle everyday problems in a calm and effective way. In a sense then, your daily life is your real final exam.

PRE-TEST NAME _____

## DEALING WITH DEATH

1. Do you feel familiar with the issues regarding planning a funeral?

| Not Familiar At All | Somewhat Familiar | Familiar | Very Familiar |
|---|---|---|---|
| 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 |

2. Are you familiar with nursing homes and hospice programs?

| Not Familiar At All | Somewhat Familiar | Familiar | Very Familiar |
|---|---|---|---|
| 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 |

3. How familiar are you with the stages we all go through in dealing with death?

| Not Familiar At All | Somewhat Familiar | Familiar | Very Familiar |
|---|---|---|---|
| 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 |

4. How familiar are you with the social and psychological concepts of death?

| Not Familiar At All | Somewhat Familiar | Familiar | Very Familiar |
|---|---|---|---|
| 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 |

5. Are you aware that confronting the death of a loved one is essential to resolving your own grief?

| Not Familiar At All | Somewhat Familiar | Familiar | Very Familiar |
|---|---|---|---|
| 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 |

6. Do you feel you are familiar with the alternatives for the care of a dying person?

| Not Familiar At All | Somewhat Familiar | Familiar | Very Familiar |
|---|---|---|---|
| 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 |

7. How familiar are you with the reasons for writing a will?

| Not Familiar At All | Somewhat Familiar | Familiar | Very Familiar |
|---|---|---|---|
| 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 |

8. How familiar are you now with dealing with the concepts of death?

| Not Familiar At All | Somewhat Familiar | Familiar | Very Familiar |
|---|---|---|---|
| 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 |

## DEALING WITH DEATH

**NOTE TO TEACHER:** Please detach this sheet before giving the packet to a student.

**OBJECTIVES:**

Students will:

1. Identify alternative ways of providing care to terminally-ill individuals.
2. Utilize their understanding of the grief process to develop positive coping skills.
3. Identify actions which can be taken now to plan for the practical details relative to death.
4. Recognize their options and consumer rights when making funeral arrangements.

## DEALING WITH DEATH

### IDENTIFY THE PROBLEM

Today we seem to be very open in discussing money, emotions, relationships, and sex. Yet there is one "fact of life" which many of us often avoid talking about. It happens to everyone. It cannot be avoided. Yet even close friends rarely discuss it. The subject is death.

Little in our culture helps us to deal with this normal part of the life cycle. It begins early as parents try to shield their children from death. They won't take their children to hospitals to see sick relatives. When someone close to them dies, parents often explain it to children that the dead person "is asleep" or "went away." This may be a big mistake as it doesn't help children learn to accept death. It may even cause new fears where children may become afraid to go to sleep since they start to associate sleep with death. Or if a parent must go away on a trip, kids fear they will never return. Even the language of adults carries on this denial. We refer to someone who died as "passing away" or "gone to their rest." The word "death" itself seems to cause fear in us.

When dealing with death, there are two major issues, emotional and practical. This packet will help you face the event which affects all of us and gain a realistic outlook on this final fact of life.

### GATHERING INFORMATION

It is only recently that we have begun to study how people cope with their feelings when faced with death. For example, Dr. Elizabeth Kubler-Ross has found that persons facing death go through a series of stages until they learn to accept it. These stages are:

1. DENIAL - The person refuses to accept that she/he is dying. They may deny test results, "doctor shop" to find another diagnosis, or maintain that this can't be happening to them.
2. ANGER - The dying person may be angry at the people around them or they may be angry at God (e.g. How could He let this happen to me? It's not fair. I've led a good life, etc.).
3. BARGAINING - Here the person tries to make a bargain with himself, his doctors, or God. It generally comes down to "If I do....., I can be saved."

4. DEPRESSION - Now the person starts to mourn for the loss of his life - the people he'll miss, the things he hasn't had a chance to do, etc.

5. ACCEPTANCE - The individual accepts the reality of his death.

It is important to understand that these stages are normal and necessary if the person is to come to terms with death. If you know someone who is dying, it helps to understand these stages. Then you can offer support. We often try and avoid talking about death. In reality, all the people involved need to work through these stages. Discussion and sorting out our feelings are the ways to do it. Worksheet 1 will help you look at some common feelings about death and think of ways you might respond. In thinking of what your answers might be, be careful not to encourage the person to deny the reality they're trying to deal with.

## WORKSHEET 1

### STAGES OF THE GRIEF PROCESS

Assume a close friend or relative has learned she/he has a terminal illness. In order to be supportive, you have been visiting him/her regularly. In the course of your visits, the dying individual makes the comments given below. In each case:

1. Tell what stage of accepting death is represented by the statement.
2. Describe something helpful which you might say.

1. "It's not fair. I've always tried to live a good life and treat other people well. Look at how many people are criminals and bums, and they live to an old age."

STAGE:

YOUR RESPONSE:

2. "I just heard of a new treatment in Mexico. If my doctor doesn't look into it, I'll go there myself."

STAGE:

YOUR RESPONSE:

3. "What are you doing here again? You're healthy and fine. I'm sure you have better things to be doing than sitting here with me."

STAGE:

YOUR RESPONSE:

4. "I know if I just straighten out my personal life and make up with Harry, everything will be O.K."

STAGE:

YOUR RESPONSE:

5. "I'll never see my kids grow up. I'll miss all the special times in their lives."
STAGE:

YOUR RESPONSE:

For someone who has lost a loved one, it is expected that there will be physical and emotional stress to cope with. For example, people who have recently had someone close to them die are at higher risk of getting sick. They may also have trouble sleeping and eating and their energy level may be affected.

Emotionally, the person who is grieving must go through the same stages of accepting death as the person who died. At first, the grieving individual may feel dazed and numb and deny that the person really has died. A little later, the person may be angry. She/he may feel God has been unfair in "taking away" the loved one. Or they may even feel angry at the person who died for leaving them. Later depression will be a normal part of the grief process. The person may feel lonely, anxious, and guilty. Guilt is a common part of grieving as we regret that we weren't nicer or more understanding when the dead person was alive. It also may force the surviving person to think about that someday they, too, will die. However with time and working through the grief process, people will usually come to accept the loss of the loved one.

Whether one is dealing with their own death or the death of a loved one, they will have feelings which may hurt or be confusing. Trying to pretend such feelings don't exist only makes the problem last longer. Coming to terms with such emotions requires private time and thought. However it is also necessary to share our grief with others. Many people do feel uncomfortable when talking about death. Still it is helpful to find someone we can confide in at this time. Some people to consider are a relative, friend, member of the clergy, a professional counselor, or a nurse or doctor who has received training in dealing with death.

Facing it, sharing it.

Sometime you may be the person someone reaches out to for support in coping with death. It is helpful to know that you, too, may have confused feelings. On the one hand, you want to be able to comfort someone you care about. Yet you may not know what to say. Therefore you might find yourself trying to change the subject or saying things such as "everything will be O.K." In reality, everything probably won't be O.K., and life will never be exactly the same again.

A person who is grieving either their own impending death or the loss of a loved one must work through their own feelings. However you can be a source of support by being willing to listen. The person who is grieving doesn't expect you to offer any real solutions. What they do need is someone who cares and who will share their grief. Don't be afraid of your own sad feelings. In the long run, you will probably find yourself both stronger and find more joy in life if you deal with them honestly. Worksheet 2 helps you think about how you can offer support to someone who is grieving.

## WORKSHEET 2

## FIGURING OUT YOUR FEELINGS

This exercise will help you think your feelings when dealing with death. The first part of each question is an open-ended sentence. Don't think about this part too much. Just finish the statement by writing down how you usually respond.

The second part asks you to think about your usual reactions. If you think you usually respond well, leave this part blank. If you think you might improve your usual response, write down your ideas. Talk about your answers with someone else in class.

1a. When the subject of death comes up in conversation, I usually respond.....

1b. I could improve my response if I .....

2a. If I see someone whom I care about cry, I generally .....

2b. It might be better if I .....

3a. If I hear a close friend or relative has had a death in the family, I usually .....

3b. I could improve my response if I .....

4a. If I hear that someone I care about will die soon, I would .....

4b. It might be better if I .....

## DEVELOPING ALTERNATIVE SOLUTIONS

Besides dealing with feelings, there are also many practical matters which must be handled. Since most people are very upset after someone dies, it is very hard to make sound decisions at such a time. Therefore it makes sense to think through these issues before it is absolutely necessary.

The first issue is providing care for the dying person. In the past, there were usually only two choices - care at home or care in a hospital. Both have advantages and disadvantages.

Many people who are dying wish to remain at home for as long as possible. It helps them feel a sense of independence and to enjoy the warmth and comfort of their loved ones. The disadvantages are that it is difficult to provide skilled medical care, and it often puts serious burdens on other family members. Hospitals can provide the necessary care yet they are very expensive and often impersonal.

Another choice is a nursing home. Costs are generally lower than a hospital, yet they can still be high. Skilled care is available in most facilities. If you are considering a nursing home, it is very important to check out different ones. The quality of care varies widely. Some factors to consider are:

1. Enough staff to care for the patients
2. Cleanliness
3. Adequate meals
4. Many activities to pass the time
5. Support services - physical and occupational therapy, counseling services, etc.
6. Attitude toward the patients. For example, are they treated with dignity or are they babied? Are patients encouraged to be as independent as possible?

The newest choice is hospice care. Hospices may offer in-patient care in a setting with a home-like atmosphere. Or they may provide medical services on a 24-hour basis which makes it possible for the terminally ill person to remain at home. Besides the medical services, the staff members generally have special training so they can provide support to the entire family. This option is not available everywhere. However when it is, hospices can offer a humane, dignified, and lower cost way to care for dying.

Wills are another topic to consider in our realistic planning for death. A will can specify

how you want your possessions distributed after your death. Many people make a mistake and assume wills are only necessary for wealthy people. If you own a home, car, furniture, some jewelry, etc. it is better for you to say how they will be distributed rather than to rely on state law which would come into effect if you die without a will. If you have children, it is also important that you decide on who will be their legal guardians if you die.

A WILL IS IMPORTANT

It is true that you can prepare your own will. However there are certain legal requirements so be sure to get reliable information. Your public library may have references available for you to borrow. Lawyers generally charge a fairly low fee for the preparation of a simple will. It may be worthwhile for you to seek their assistance so you are sure the will is valid.

One of the hardest decisions that survivors must face after the death of a loved one is making funeral arrangements. Because of the strong emotions and the time pressures, it is almost impossible to make an informed consumer decision. Yet the costs are likely to be a truly large expense for the family. The family may also feel guilty if they don't provide the most elaborate funeral they can afford. There is always the danger that someone will think that the family "really didn't care very much" for the dead person if they try to cut costs.

If people actually planned their own funerals, many would prefer something very simple and low-cost. There is a way to be sure that this happens. It is called a letter of last instructions. Such a letter provides details for the person who will make final arrangements for you. It is a separate document from a will. It does allow you to tell the type of arrangements you would want.

Worksheet 3 is a copy of a letter of last instructions. Although it may be hard to think about your own death, you can save your loved ones much aggravation, pressure, and expense. You might be surprised at the number of choices which you have beyond the traditional funeral. Carefully think through each choice and what you really would want. When you complete the Worksheet, detach it from the booklet and make a copy. Keep one for yourself and give the original to whomever will be responsible for making funeral arrangements for you. Be sure to talk to them about it.

## WORKSHEET 3

## LETTER OF LAST INSTRUCTIONS

Information for Death Certificate:

YOUR NAME: _____

STREET ADDRESS: _____

CITY: _____ COUNTY: _____ STATE: _____

BIRTHDATE: _____ AGE: _____

PLACE OF BIRTH: _____

MARITAL STATUS: _____ NAME OF SPOUSE: _____

SOCIAL SECURITY NUMBER: _____

OCCUPATION: _____

FATHER'S NAME: _____

MOTHER'S MAIDEN NAME: _____

SERVICE IN ARMED FORCES: _____

Person Who Will Carry Out My Wishes When I Die

NAME: _____

ADDRESS: _____

_____

PHONE: _____

Check Which Type of Funeral You Would Want:

_____ Service in Funeral Home

_____ Church Service

_____ Donate Body To Medical School

_____ No Service

_____ Other (describe)

Do You Want The Body Present?

_____ Body Not Present

_____ Casket Open

_____ Casket Closed

Do You Want The Body

_____ Buried?

_____ Cremated?

Cost Should Be Limited To

_____ Least possible Expense

_____ Average Cost

_____ As Much As Can Be Afforded

Recently the Federal Trade Commission has made it easier for consumers to make informed decisions about funerals. Under the new rules you have the right to contact funeral directors and obtain the following:

1. The cost of individual items and services over the telephone. This will make it easier to compare prices.
2. You can obtain a written price list of all goods and services.
3. When arranging a funeral, you can purchase only those individual items and services which you want rather than a "package deal."
4. You have the right to be informed about any legal requirements dealing with embalming and cremation.

As with all consumer purchases, the more you know the more intelligent your decision will be.

## DECIDING ON A COURSE OF ACTION

This packet has stressed that death is a normal part of the life cycle. Since it will happen to everyone, it is worthwhile to come to terms with talking about death and to examine our feelings and options. There are choices which you have which can help to provide humane and dignified care for the dying. You can also reduce stress for your loved ones if you carefully plan the practical matters connected with death well in advance. Finally no matter what decisions you make, it is important to admit your own confused feelings and to seek support from others.

## EVALUATING YOUR DECISION

Certain decisions you make need to be evaluated again from time to time. For example, review your letter of last instructions occasionally to see if anything needs to be changed. If you are taking care of someone who is terminally ill, again re-evaluate everyone's options from time to time. Probably no solution will be perfect. However one can usually be found which meets most of the major needs of the people involved.

Besides the act of dying itself, it is worth remembering that we almost always have choices in life. We need not be swept along with the tide of events. If we don't like the way things are going, we can take action to change the situation. Perhaps the best action we can take to meet death with maturity and dignity is to make our choices carefully throughout life. To avoid approaching death with bitterness and regrets, chart the course of your life carefully now.

## CASE STUDY

## DEALING WITH DEATH

Your best friend has come to visit from another state. In talking to him you discover that his mother has died recently and he feels very saddened by her death.

You feel like you want to help him in some way.

You talk to him about her being ill, the funeral, and what happened to her home and her belongings.

Death is a "fact of life" that must be faced, understood and accepted. The feelings of anger and depression we all experience are very normal when someone we love had died. It is an eventuality of life that we are never quite prepared for.

Think about the loss of a loved one and how you might help yourself and those around you to deal with the death of someone close to you.

The next page has some questions based on this Case Study. They will help you to see how you have improved your problem-solving skills.

## CASE STUDY QUESTIONS

1. State in your own words what are the major problems in the case study.

2. What kinds of information would you need to know to plan a course of action?

3. What resources in your community might help in solving this problem?

4. List as many possible solutions as you can.

5. Which solution would you recommend? Why?

6. Any one solution is rarely perfect. What problems might arise with the solution you chose?

7. How would you decide if your solution worked well?

8. If your first approach didn't work out, how might you improve it?

POST-TEST NAME_____

## DEALING WITH DEATH

1. How familiar are you with the social and psychological concepts of death?

| Not Familiar At All | Somewhat Familiar | Familiar | Very Familiar |
|---|---|---|---|
| 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 |

2. How familiar are you with the stages we all go through in dealing with death?

| Not Familiar At All | Somewhat Familiar | Familiar | Very Familiar |
|---|---|---|---|
| 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 |

3. Are you aware that confronting the death of a loved one is essential to resolving your own grief?

| Not Familiar At All | Somewhat Familiar | Familiar | Very Familiar |
|---|---|---|---|
| 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 |

4. Do you feel you are familiar with the alternatives for the care of a dying person?

| Not Familiar At All | Somewhat Familiar | Familiar | Very Familiar |
|---|---|---|---|
| 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 |

5. Are you familiar with nursing homes and hospice programs?

| Not Familiar At All | Somewhat Familiar | Familiar | Very Familiar |
|---|---|---|---|
| 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 |

6. How familiar are you with the reasons for writing a will?

| Not Familiar At All | Somewhat Familiar | Familiar | Very Familiar |
|---|---|---|---|
| 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 |

7. Do you feel familiar with the issues regarding planning a funeral?

| Not Familiar At All | Somewhat Familiar | Familiar | Very Familiar |
|---|---|---|---|
| 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 |

8. How familiar are you about the overall general knowledge contained in this packet?

| Not Familiar At All | Somewhat Familiar | Familiar | Very Familiar |
|---|---|---|---|
| 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 |

## STUDENT EVALUATION

We are very interested in how you feel about this book. Please complete the following checklist. There is space at the bottom for your comments. Anything you might want to add can be written there.

| | YES | NO |
|---|---|---|
| 1. The material was interesting. | ____ | ____ |
| 2. I learned some new ideas. | ____ | ____ |
| 3. The information will be useful in my daily life. | ____ | ____ |
| 4. It was easy to read. | ____ | ____ |
| 5. The exercises and case study helped me use my new skills. | ____ | ____ |
| 6. I was able to do most of the work without help from the teacher. | ____ | ____ |

The packet stressed a specific way to make decisions. It includes:

1. Identify the problem.
2. Gather information.
3. Think of different solutions and weigh their good and bad points.
4. Make a decision.
5. Decide if your course of action was successful. If not, make changes.

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 7. I understand this approach to making decisions. | ____ | ____ |
| 8. I think it will be useful to me. | ____ | ____ |
| 9. I learned more about the community services which are available. | ____ | ____ |

Comments:

Your Age: _____

Sex: _____

Highest grade you've completed: _____

How many hours did it take you to complete this booklet? _____